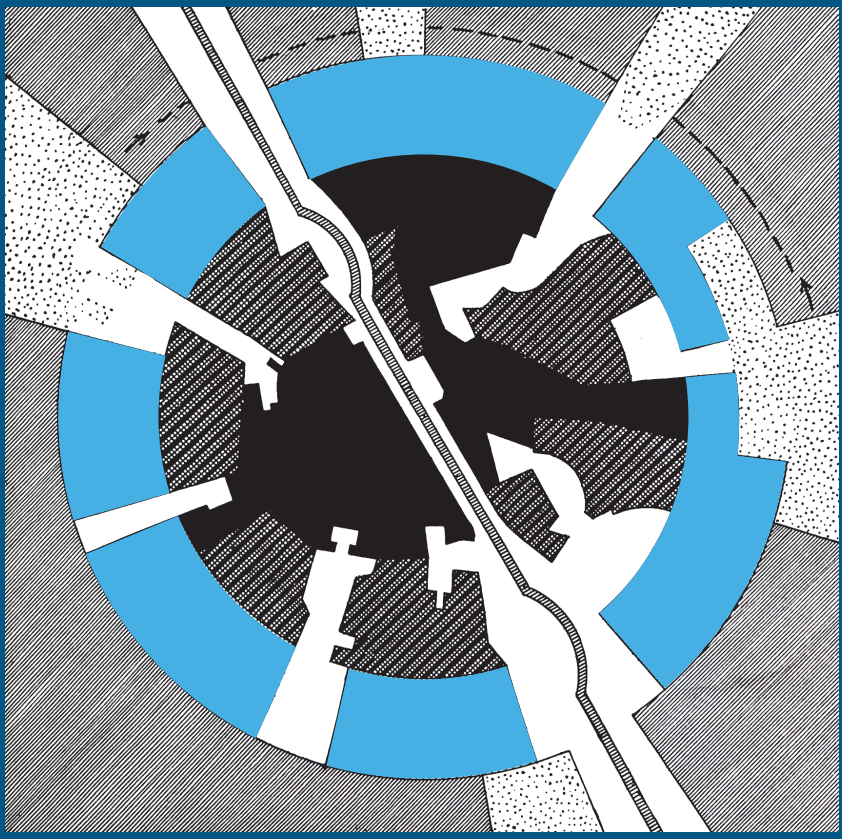
RACES TO MODERNITY



METROPOLITAN ASPIRATIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE, 1890–1940

Edited by Jan C. Behrends
and Martin Kohlrausch

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An Introduction

Jan C. Behrends and Martin Kohlrausch

In his renowned "Iron Curtain" speech—delivered on March 5, 1946, in Fulton, Missouri—Winston Churchill evoked the "famous cities" of Central and Eastern Europe. Alerting the distant American public to the division of Europe, Churchill listed what he believed to be household names like Bucharest, Sofia, Budapest, and Warsaw to demonstrate that familiar places were besieged by Joseph Stalin. Indirectly, Churchill was echoing a process that had taken place in the decades preceding his speech, a process that had confirmed the metropolitan aspirations of these cities, their European appeal, and their global relevance.

The growth of cities and urban life is at the heart of the modern experience in Europe. Metropolitan cities such as London and Paris were certainly forerunners in this development: their rapid expansion began in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Large parts of Central and Eastern Europe underwent urbanization and industrialization with considerable delay. But beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, the towns in the Romanov and Habsburg empires as well as in the Balkans grew into cities and metropolitan areas. They changed at an astonishing pace. This transformation has long been interpreted as an attempt to overcome the economic and cultural backwardness of the region and to catch up to Western Europe.[1] The chapters published in this volume confirm the importance of the Western model as well as the influence of international

[1] Berend, *History Derailed*, 228–34.

experts on city planning at the periphery of Europe. In addition, this volume presents an alternative perspective that aims to understand the genesis of Eastern European cities with a metropolitan character or metropolitan aspirations as a process sui generis. In order to analyze the history of Eastern Europe's large cities, the contributors to this volume take into account the peculiarities of the region—that is, a wide range of factors that cannot exclusively be subsumed under the label of backwardness. The decades from 1890 until the beginning of World War II are a period of crucial importance because the Eastern European urbanization process—including the mass migration of peasants to towns and cities—did not end or slow down like in the West after 1918. Throughout the twentieth century, evolving metropolitan cities such as Moscow, Warsaw, or Belgrade remained moldable entities to a much higher degree than their Western European counterparts. Even if in some cities in the region modernization had set in earlier, it was now that the reflection of one's own status reached new heights—in mediatized exchange, in numerous expert travels, or in placing the city within the discourse on national and imperial renewal. In this context, precisely the perception of one's own backwardness led to recurring initiatives to recast the cities, while always keeping in mind Western European models. At the same time the emergence of modern urbanism in the years after 1900 held a particular promise in the eastern half of the continent.

By using the terms modernity, modernization, and modernism, the research in this volume points to a specific European tradition that has in many ways rightly been criticized. However, it seems difficult—if not impossible—to analyze the great transformation, the profound changes that unfolded in Eastern Europe from the 1890s on without discussing the concepts that highlight the dynamics that led to the reshaping of Eastern European cities and society. This is not to imply, however, that a common goal existed or that the cities studied were on a linear path of Westernization. Rather, local conditions shaped the changes. Still, the process of change triggered in politics, society, and urban life can, for our purposes, be called modernization. The term modernization has often been associated with a reflection of change and the idea of a moldable future. The latter is a particularly significant idea in the eastern part

of Europe. While urban backwardness could be found also in large parts of Southern and even Western Europe well into the twentieth century, the idea of catching up to a "European standard" merged with general ideas of transforming the region politically and (re)establishing nation states.

There is a general consensus in the field that modernization—globally, but also in the Eastern European context—accelerated during the fin de siècle. Thus, the end of the nineteenth century can be interpreted as the start of a dramatic era that has been called *classical* or *high modernity*, an era of unprecedented upheaval stretching roughly from the 1880s to the 1960s.[2] With regard to cities, modernity is the period during which mass migration, technological change, and economic growth brought about a new urban condition. The technical and scientific modernization of the cityscape did not come to a conclusion, however, but rather turned into an essential part of this condition itself.[3]

It has also rightly been criticized that both the periodization and the commonly quoted features of "classical" modernization reflect a Western European reality and that they fail to describe different paths to modernity.[4] Yet those engaged in the discourse on urban change in the cities scrutinized in this volume had a rather clear notion of "European modernity." The Western path served as a model—albeit sometimes intentionally employed to overcome opposition at home.[5] This constant reflection illuminates European modernity as well as the specific modernization experiences of the Eastern European cities.[6] It is against this background that modernism, also as a mode of comparing oneself with Western examples, became so important. To illustrate this context, we use the meta-

[2] See, for example, Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 451–87; Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, 109–16; Herbert, "Europe in High Modernity," 5–21; for a critical reflection, see Raphael, "Ordnungsmuster der 'Hochmoderne,'" 73–91; for a perspective beyond the late nineteenth century, see Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*; for more on the process of territorialization, see Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History," 807–31.

[3] Levin, *Urban Modernity*.

[4] Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities*.

[5] Kloczkowski et al., *Drogi do Nowoczesności*.

[6] Wood, *Becoming Metropolitan*.

phor "races" to modernity to depict a competition that was not imposed from above but resulted from the dynamics that were unfolding in the region itself.

Modernism, the third crucial term here, is a specific style of architecture and urban planning that evolved during the first half of the twentieth century and became an influential transnational movement.[7] Notwithstanding the ongoing debates about its merits and normative presumptions, modernism points to an important specificity of interpreting urban development. While modern painting and Taylorist production technology might only at third glance have something in common, cities obviously exhibit the whole range of modern features. Modernity and architecture were almost intrinsically linked.[8] Aesthetic and technological developments and decisions went hand in hand, with modernist architects often construing themselves not so much as builders, but as harbingers and producers of modern conditions.

In its deliberate and fashioned departure from the development of art and architecture, this very modernism had a particular appeal in the eastern part of Europe.[9] The history of the Eastern European cities with metropolitan aspirations is part of the development of the modern era while, in a more narrow sense, it is part and parcel of the history of modernist architecture and planning. Simplifying matters, we might claim that urban planning in Eastern Europe had to solve the problems of the nineteenth century using the knowledge, concepts, and aesthetics of the early twentieth century. In this sense, our approach promises not only insights into the history of Eastern Europe, but also constitutes a part of the very story of modernity and modernism. The entry into the modern age was full of promise and perspective, full of hubris and destruction. These ambivalences of the modern condition by no means escaped the contemporaries. Even the most ardent city planners and the most optimistic politicians were clearly reacting to the enormous challenges of the modern age.

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[7] See the classical works by Berman, *All That Is Solid*; and Gay, *Modernism*.

[8] Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity*.

[9] Vidler, *Histories of the Immediate Present*; Tournikiotis, *Historiography*; and Lenger, *Metropolen der Moderne.*

The East European City in a European Perspective

The dawn of modernity in Europe was marked by the beginning of the end of agrarian society, the rise of industry, and urban expansion. Since the nineteenth century, historians and sociologists such as Max Weber have allotted European cities a special role in this process. In the early twentieth century, Georg Simmel described the inhabitants of the European metropolis as the archetypical modern individuals. These notions underline the significance of the European city as the cradle of bourgeois self-determination, an emerging sphere of economic power, and a space of social balance.[10] Thus far, urban history has tended to focus mostly on examples from Western Europe that were interpreted as examples of a general development and as typical cases.[11] Eastern European cities were often presented as special cases.[12] Although no consensus has been reached with regard to the characteristics and the geographical range of the European city, scholars agree that the attempt to define a specifically European urban development significantly contributes to focusing the discussion. This perspective, however, bears the risk of marginalizing important developments in Europe's urban history. This volume examines—with a focus on the Eastern European context—a regional manifestation of the European city that can also function as a sort of test case for the concept itself. How can the study of Eastern European urbanity enhance our understanding of the modern European city?

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[10] Siebel, *Die europäische Stadt*; Kaelble, "Die Besonderheiten der europäischen Stadt," 256–74.

[11] For an analysis of the European city that focuses exclusively on the West, see Lees et al., *Cities*; and more recently Lampugnani, *Die Stadt*; more nuanced in geographical terms is Lenger et al., *Die europäische Stadt*; focused on Eastern European cities, but for a rather broad approach, see Krzoska et al., *Stadtleben*; Stachel et al., *Urbane Kulturen*; Goehrke et al., *Städte im östlichen Europa*; for a brief reflection on Eastern Europe and the European city during the postwar period, see Wagenaar, *Happy*, 446–90.

[12] Hamm, *The City in Late Imperial Russia*; Brower, *The Russian City*; for an emphasis on the imperial dimensions of Russian urbanity, see Steinberg et al., *Kul'tury gorodov Rossiiskoi imperii*.

This volume includes cases that cover a geographical area from Scandinavia across Russia and Central Europe to the Balkans. In the nineteenth century, cities such as Helsinki, Warsaw, Belgrade, or Athens were undoubtedly at the periphery of Europe. However, from 1890 on they were seized by modernity's processes of accelerated social change.[13] This acceleration was by no means limited to places like London, Chicago, or Berlin. Within a short period of time Eastern European towns had to grapple with similar modern problems—from housing to migration, from poverty to ethnic and social tensions.[14] Adapting to modern life, accepting its perils and enjoying its pleasures became a task for generations of new city dwellers.[15] The peasant culture of agrarian society continued to influence everyday life in these cities; many villages existed within the urban realm and were barely concealed by modern façades. Modernity and tradition were only a heartbeat apart: in the Eastern European metropolis they constantly overlapped and interacted, which is characteristic of the entire area studied here.

Many of these features also hold true for, say, Spanish cities; but it is the experience of belonging to an empire that binds together the Eastern European cases. Of course, there are exceptions to this assumption. Therefore, cities like Helsinki or Athens—often associated with other regions, but sharing the geopolitical background and legacy of large empires—are also included in this volume.

This volume follows a broad chronological perspective. First, all the cities discussed here were subject to rapid and continuing transformation from 1890 on. They stand for the urbanization of societies that had traditionally been dominated by agriculture and peasant life. Second, all these cities were affected by the political turmoil and nation building that profoundly reshaped the eastern half of the continent. The decline of the Ottoman Empire and the fall of the Romanov and Habsburg dynasties created a new political landscape: nation states emerged in the post-imperial realm.[16] Towns

[13] Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 451–87.
[14] Janatková et al., *Wohnen in der Großstadt*.
[15] Neuberger, *Hooliganism*; Wood, *Becoming Metropolitan*; Steinberg, *Petersburg Fin de Siècle*.
[16] Leonhard et al., *Empires und Nationalstaaten*.

that until then had been provincial centers became capitals of independent countries.[17] Their new governments felt the need to represent national power and legitimacy, both of which were to be demonstrated in their capital cities.[18] In order to improve their capitals, they wholeheartedly embraced the age of planning, which had already conquered the western part of the continent.[19] Third, the volume argues that the process of accelerated modernization that changed the face of Eastern Europe relied heavily on the state.[20] While the urban boom in Britain or Germany was mostly a consequence of economic growth, much of the expansion of Eastern European cities took place in times of uncertainty and crisis after the collapse of empires. Where an affluent bourgeoisie was lacking, the state had to invest into the future of its metropolitan cities. Thus, modernization in Eastern Europe generally relied far more heavily on state policies, and these policies were often driven by the modern ideologies of socialism and nationalism. The strong role of the state also marks a continuum across the 1917–1918 divide: it existed in the imperial setting and in the nation states of the interwar era. In comparison to the state, civil society and the economy remained weak. But its relative strength placed many burdens on the state as the agent of modernity. The overstretching of state resources could then, paradoxically, make a strong state look weak.

The studies in this volume focus on the interplay of political, cultural, and infrastructural factors in what we call the race to modernity. The metaphor of a "race" not only alludes to the different speeds of modernization. It is also intended to describe a deliberate and reflected process, the self-conception of these cities' elites and actors, their striving to become "modern" and "European"—two terms that were often used synonymously during the period in question. Moreover, the terms refer to both the aspired "finish" of West-

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[17] Blau et al., *Shaping the Great City*; Alofsin, *When Buildings Speak*; Gunzburger Makaš et al., *Capital Cities*. See Prokopovych, "Introduction to Section 'East European Cities,'" 28–31.

[18] Bartetzky et al., *Neue Staaten—neue Bilder*; Purchla et al., *Nation*.

[19] Sonne, *Representing the State*; Gordon, *Capital Cities*; Ward, *Planning the Twentieth-Century City*; for a comparative perspective, see Bodenschatz et al., *Stadtvisionen*.

[20] Turnock, *The Economy of East Central Europe*.

ern-style metropolitan cities and the competition among "rivals" running on the same track.

Capitals like Warsaw, Kaunas, or Helsinki faced not only infrastructural challenges. They were also the stages on which new states had to prove their legitimacy, including the construction of representative government buildings, national libraries, and theaters, as well as solutions to social problems that persisted in the region. Urban development was equated to nation building. This was especially pronounced in the urban public sphere in Eastern Europe.[21] In a post-imperial setting and in a region characterized by ethnic diversity, this could also mean the nationalization of urban space. Therefore, the shaping of the Eastern European metropolis can be understood as a process in which architecture followed ideology; a process that to a striking degree linked urban planning to far-reaching promises of an improved human condition and a prosperous national future.[22] In the accompanying discourse the past, painted overly black, is contrasted with the improvements of the national present or future.

Finally, this volume pursues the question of possible caesuras beyond the 1917–1918 mark. The social and cultural developments of the cities in question were not solely shaped by political ruptures, but also by social processes of the *longue durée*. In this regard, we must take into consideration the legacies of the multinational European empires—the institutional and communication structures—which did not suddenly cease to exist with the end of World War I, but rather determined future developments in manifold ways. The problems of the pre-1914 era were often amplified by the expectations of national or, in the Russian case, revolutionary elites. With the outbreak of World War II, this era abruptly came to an end. Extermination warfare, ethnic cleansing, the Holocaust, and totalitarian dictatorship reshaped the region in a multitude of ways. Urban history was overshadowed by the history of the European catastrophe, and the race to modernity turned into a voyage to barbarism. Therefore, it seems plausible to pursue the investigation across the 1917–1918 divide, but to limit the perspective to the interwar pe-

[21] Hofmann et al., *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit*.
[22] Cf. the many examples on Eastern Europe in Bartetzky et al., *Urban Planning*.

riod. After 1945 cities such as Helsinki, Belgrade, Moscow, or Athens found themselves in different political contexts. In much of Eastern Europe, the pluralism of the interwar era had to make way for the Soviet empire. Although one could argue that many of the phenomena observed in this book—urban growth, dependence on the state, the tension between peasant tradition and modern life—extended well into the post-World War II era, a comparative study of the entire Eastern European region ranging from the Baltics to the Balkans seems less justifiable and more problematic. In any case, it would require another volume.

Given the complexities of the questions raised here, our definition of metropolitan cities is a pragmatic one.[23] Arguably cities like Zagreb or Kaunas lack many characteristics associated with the term. Yet we still believe that they share decisive features with the more illustrious examples. They turned into focal points of national, governmental, and public attention in the period we are investigating and thus underwent the deep transformations we are attempting to trace. In their national and regional contexts, they became examples of modernity and metropolitan life.

The Social and the National Question in the Eastern Metropolis

Without doubt, the advent of modernity, with its acceleration of social change and rapid disintegration of tradition, created numerous new challenges for Eastern Europe cities. Modernization also highlighted the structures of the region, that is the unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities and the question of ethnic diversity in the post-imperial realm in the age of nationalization.[24] The more stagnant social order of the feudal age which had been regulated through estates lost its significance in the course of the nineteenth century. The social body of the growing cities was much more complex—in political, economic, and cultural terms—than the village or the small town had been. A peasant who moved to the city

[23] For an illuminating discussion of metropolitan cities in general, see Zimmermann, *Die Zeit der Metropolen*.

[24] Hirschhausen, *Die Grenzen der Gemeinsamkeit*.

did not, of course, turn into an urban dweller overnight. On the contrary, the new urban settlers carried many traits of rural life into the emerging cities. Further, a migrant would experience the fluidity and confusion of modern city life. Modernity's complexity could lead to troubling experiences and pessimistic visions. Therefore, the Eastern European city was a place where new cultures and identities developed. Migrants as well as the elite had to position themselves socially and culturally in the urban environment; they had to learn to deal with a state that was much more present in the urban space than in the vast openness of the countryside and they adopted modern ideologies like socialism or nationalism. Finally, city residents had to take sides in the conflicts that marred their communities.

In his contribution on the urban scene of prerevolutionary St. Petersburg, Mark D. Steinberg explores the meaning of modernity in the Eastern European metropolis.[25] He shows how contemporaries were bewildered by the modern age and by the notion of modernity itself, by its complexities, contingencies, and particularities. His "modern man," as described in the press, seems much less confident than Georg Simmel's famous flâneur, who was modeled on a citizen of Berlin. Steinberg demonstrates how a generation of journalists reflected the inconsistency of the modern experience. To a distressed urban public, the modern metropolis was driven by the "spirit of deceit." Steinberg's examples from St. Petersburg serve to illustrate that Eastern Europeans by no means naively embraced modernity. On the contrary, the sophisticated observers of fin-de-siècle St. Petersburg had few illusions about the pitfalls of the modern existence. In contrast to many other contributions in this volume, the pessimistic outlook of the cultural critics creates a fascinating counterpoint to the modern visions of architects and planners. Modernity on the level of Petersburg's streets was rather different from the bird's eye perspective of the great plans.

In her chapter on pre-1917 Kiev, Faith Hillis emphasizes the divisions within a multiethnic city. While official imperial culture viewed Kiev as the cradle of Russian civilization, everyday life in

[25] On St. Petersburg's road to modernity, see Clark, *Petersburg*; and Schlögel, *Das Laboratorium der Moderne*.

the city was marked by escalating tensions between its inhabitants. Social and ethnic tensions intertwined in a town where the elite were often Russian, German, or Jewish, and the workers came from the Ukrainian countryside. Thus, interwoven social, ethnic, and religious issues were at the heart of the conflict. Kiev's example illustrates the tension created by the progressing nationalization of the population. Although the countryside had long known social conflicts between the noble lords and their subjects, the combination of social and ethnic tensions in the dense space of the modern city had a new quality. Pogroms, upheavals, and revolutions often resulted in protracted fighting in the public sphere of the city. But even everyday life proved to be conflict-laden. Nationalists and radical politicians used pamphlets and newspapers to mobilize their followers. Reading rooms, mass rallies, and various forms of association were used by left- and right-wing parties as well as by ethnic groups. The high degree of organization observed by Hillis also forces us to rethink our notion of civil society: a high degree of civic involvement is by no means desirable per se. On the contrary, political mobilization can destroy civil values and turn the city into an ideological battleground.[26]

Entering the modern age, many Eastern European cities did not have a clear national identity. They were home to different ethnic groups and reflected the heterogeneity of multinational empires. Cities were not only located in borderlands, but rather were borderlands themselves, a space in which every quarter could host a different group and where the same building or institution could have conflicting meanings to various groups and individuals. Before 1914, some of these conflicts were overshadowed by the imperial order. Using the example of Vilnius, which in 1920 after more than a century of Russian rule became Polish Wilno, Theodore Weeks shows how the Polish nation state attempted to impose its order and culture on the urban space. The Polish republic tried to cleanse the city of the remnants of imperial rule and emphasize its Polishness. In Polonized Wilno there was little room for the city's Lithuanian past or for its Jewish inhabitants with their vibrant religious culture. Although it did not resort to violence, the Polish state nevertheless

[26] For the striking modernity of Kiev, see Makaryk et al., *Modernism in Kiev*.

attempted to erase the diversity that had characterized the city and create a situation in which assimilation to Polish culture became almost inevitable. Where the state invested into modern development—such as the university—it did so to strengthen the process of nationalization. Wilno also serves as an example of a more circumspect embrace of modernity. Lacking the funds for modern overhaul or reconstruction of the city, the Polish state resorted to history in order to legitimize its rule. Thus, provincial cities often pursued a different path than capitals, which were to become showcases of modernity.

Tsarist Moscow, although ethnically more homogeneous than Kiev, was deeply divided by social and cultural boundaries. The peasants turned Muscovites had little in common either with the nobility that still expected to rule the city or with the nascent merchant class. Jan C. Behrends shows that Lev Tolstoy was not alone in his perception of modern city life as a moral scandal: the question—"What is to be done?"—that the writer posed in 1886, remained central for urban thought from tsarism to Stalinism. In Moscow the tsarist administration was divided between those who chose to ignore the challenges of rapid urban growth and those who attempted to engage citizens in their attempts at social reform. After the Revolution, the Bolsheviks applied radical solutions to the city's problems—first the redistribution of property, then the attempt to violently reshape the urban landscape—but they were fighting the same battles that had been fought prior to the Revolution. Neither the cultural division between peasants and city dwellers nor the housing problem was resolved. In many cases, they erected modern façades to hide both their failure and the cost of their violent approach.

Urbanism Goes East: The Development of Capitals, Infrastructure, and Planning

After gaining independence, nascent nation states were eager to show that they had better means to improve urban life than their imperial predecessors. Their legitimacy largely rested on their ability to meet the challenges of modernization. From the time of the

French Revolution, the example of Paris—the city that had to be remade into a proud modern capital—loomed large. It triggered the desire of the national elite to recast their capitals in a Western form. This process began in the Balkans, where the retreat of Ottoman rule led to the first wave of post-imperial nation building. Using the examples of Athens, Belgrade, and Sofia, Eleni Bastéa, Dubravka Stojanović, and Elitza Stanoeva analyze the attempts of these cities to overcome the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, to shed an "oriental" past, and to transform into modern European capitals. After reestablishing the Greek state in 1832, the development of Athens quickly became one of the major goals of its monarchs. The ambition to create a "model kingdom of the East," that is an outpost of Western modernity that would be a lighthouse in a "dark area," was to become manifest in a capital that had once been the cradle of Western civilization and, according to the vision of the nineteenth century, had to regain its lost greatness. From the beginning, Western experts were involved in the process and Western capitals constantly served as a point of reference. The article traces the impact of the 1896 Olympic Games, the first of the modern era, on the development of Athens. Bastéa argues that the games served as a lesson in modern living. Foreign visitors could convince themselves of Greece's achievements and acknowledged the nation's standing among European nations. Still, the author argues, there remained a tension between the European façades and the traditional lifestyle of the inhabitants. She dubs this the experience of "dissociative modernity."

Certainly cities across Eastern Europe shared this experience, for example Belgrade, which became the capital of Serbia in 1841. Stojanović explores how following the wars of the 1870s, the Serbian state initiated the city's modernization. Her contribution points to the deficits rather than the achievements of state-sponsored development. Political instability and infighting led to constant protraction. The development of the metropolis was taken hostage by political actors; modern politics hindered modern development.

In 1879, decades after Athens and Belgrade were established as national capitals, Sofia became the capital of Bulgaria. Following the Greek example, the Bulgarians aspired to rid their city of the relics of Ottoman rule. While the oriental city was seen as unor-

dered and unhealthy, the new national metropolis would be characterized by Haussmannian proportions. However, Stanoeva points out the discrepancy between the planners' aspirations and the actual transformation of the city. Effectively, the renovation of urban space proceeded along national lines: the depopulated former Turkish quarter served as a laboratory for the modernization of Sofia. Vacated by its former imperial inhabitants, it could be restructured, while private property conflicted with the state's planning in other areas. Again, European specialists and expertise played a significant role. Stanoeva shows that Bulgarian elite began to contest this foreign dominance at the beginning of the twentieth century. They looked to their nation's past in order to develop an "authentic" style of Bulgarian architecture. Their growing self-confidence allowed them to contest Western concepts of modernity. Parallel to developments in Germany or the Soviet Union, the aggressive nationalism of the 1930s attempted to rid urban planning of its international dimension. The cooperative spirit of the first decade after World War I suffered in the "age of extremes."

In his contribution, Martin Kohlrausch uses the example of Warsaw to outline the transnational dimensions of urban planning in the interwar period. His study shows how a generation of progressive architects and planners united in the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) discovered Eastern European cities and fashioned them as a tabula rasa where their radical designs could be applied with greater ease than in the West. What has been called the golden age of urban planning in Europe was closely connected with the rise of CIAM—the organization provided a platform for modernist architects from various countries.[27] After the Soviet Union abandoned its cooperation with this group in 1931 and chose to pursue its own road to building the "socialist city," Poland became a focus of the organization and attracted international attention. Kohlrausch shows how planners attempted to overcome the perceived urban crisis of the country by means of radical planning; the old Warsaw was to make way for a Central European metropolis as outlined in the 1934 *Warszawa funkcjonalna* master plan. Warsaw's dramatic growth called for radical solutions, and

[27] Misa, "Appropriating the International Style," 71–95.

urban planning—as offered by modernist architects—seemed to hold the solution for the social problems that accompany rapid urbanization. Only through planning could Warsaw's race to modernity be successful, and the process of gathering expertise was a genuinely transnational endeavor. *Warszawa funkcjonalna* illustrates that urban development in Eastern Europe was highly dependent on the state. The form of statehood was, however, also crucial: albeit aesthetically more conventional, the Stalinist master plan for the reconstruction of Moscow, published in 1936, introduced a form of violent modernization that was hardly imaginable in previous decades. Its implementation, the use of slave labor for urban development, was only feasible in a totalitarian state.[28]

Ostmoderne? East European Modernism

Certain elements of Eastern European modernism have become part of the very notion of what is modern. In this context, one could mention certain images of Russian constructivism or Alvar Aalto's design and architecture.[29] Steven A. Mansbach triggered a lively discussion about Eastern modernism in the fields of architecture and art history.[30] It allows for an interdisciplinary perspective on urban development and covers a number of phenomena, such as professional communication and interaction between international discourses and their manifestation in the framework of a city or nation state. This shows how closely the aesthetic dimension of modernism was intertwined with political and social modernization in the new states of the "East"—albeit in complex, sometimes contradictory ways. This debate is moreover an exciting attempt to overcome the notion of a simple west-to-east direction in the trans-

[28] Bodenschatz et al., *Städtebau im Schatten Stalins*.

[29] Buchli, *Archaeology*; Černichov et al., *Jakov Černichov: Sowjetischer Architekt der Avantgarde*; and Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, *Konstruktivistische Internationale Schöpferische Arbeitsgemeinschaft*.

[30] Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe*; Lesnikowski, *East European Modernism*; Benson, *Central European Avant-gardes*; for individual countries, see Mahečić, *Moderna arhitektura*; Blagojević et al., *Modernism in Serbia*; Popescu, *Le style national Roumain*; and Anděl et al., *The New Vision*.

fer of knowledge and intellectual fashions. We believe the term "eastmodern" can also be applied to our understanding of the urban history of Eastern Europe in a broader sense. It helps to explain the intriguing phenomenon of how the region's deficits—actual or perceived—provided a particularly fertile ground for modernism. To the degree that modern architects depended on the state in absence of bourgeois clients, the new states also depended on such experts of modernism to establish the image—but also the social infrastructure—they needed so desperately.[31]

Laura Kolbe shows how the Finnish capital Helsinki, prior to 1914 a provincial town at the periphery of the Russian Empire, was turned into a symbol of Eastern European modernism. Although the city preserved its historical center and imperial legacy—without iconoclasm witnessed in the Balkans or in Poland—the planning of the Finnish metropolis predated the foundation of the independent state. There were remarkable attempts at public–private partnership, but on the whole the process was driven by the idea of creating a Finnish metropolis. The expectations were high: newly erected government buildings were to be at once representative, modern, and national. From the 1920s on, Nordic classicism became one of the widely admired representations of modern urbanity.[32]

Much less known are the examples of the Lithuanian interwar capital Kaunas and the other Baltic cities Steven A. Mansbach explores. The author shows how artists were assigned the task not only of representing the new states, but also of proving their democratic and cultural viability. Lithuania serves as a particularly interesting example because it embodied all the problems of the region: with Kaunas as ersatz capital (instead of Vilnius, which became part of the Second Polish Republic), it was difficult for Lithuania to aspire to national representation of power. Kaunas possessed almost none of the features necessary to fill such a role. The choice for modernism was, of course, also due to the restrictions imposed by the economic situation. It gave the provincial town of Kaunas a whiff of internationality. Mansbach points to professional journals as the most important driving belt for the

[31] Guillén, *The Taylorized Beauty*.
[32] Connah, *Finland*.

transfer of the modern style to the Baltic countries. In this sense "eastmodern" illustrates the high degree of reflected modernization in the cities under scrutiny here.[33]

Finally, Eve Blau sheds light on the many transformations that shaped the modern experience in Zagreb, present-day capital of Croatia. She shows how the whole notion of modern planning was rendered absurd by conflicting authorities. This process led to complete disintegration and modernization from below that rested more on local initiative than on central authority. The modernity of Zagreb's development was due to its long experience of operating within transnational geopolitical structures and transterritorial urban networks. Rather than building on institutional structures, modern Zagreb was built on informal networks. Still, its architectural designs and plans are part and parcel of European modernism. It could even be argued that the deliberate sparing of central space in the inner city for later grandiose schemes can be seen as a powerful expression of the region's belief in urban modernization. Zagreb might have been one of the also-rans for the time being, but this was not to remain so.[34]

Some Conclusions

The contributions to this volume confirm many of the editors' assumptions about the modern experience in Eastern Europe: the demanding social and ethnic tensions, the strong role of the state, the search for radical planning solutions, and the ties to the international modernist movement during the interwar years are reflected in the empirical research presented here. In this respect, the emergence of the Eastern European metropolis is indeed a process sui generis. The ambivalence of the modern experience is another theme that can be traced throughout the volume: optimism and hubris, planning and chaos, social progress and violent setbacks were

[33] For what might be seen as a striking continuity into the socialist period, see Hurnaus et al., *Eastmodern*.

[34] For competition between cities in the region, see Kozińska-Witt, *Krakau*; and Moravánszky, *Competing Visions*.

closely connected. Overall, the settings changed so rapidly that none of the political actors could claim to be in control. Rather, they were propelled forward in a multitude of urban races to modernity.

In many of the countries studied here, the process of urbanization continued after 1945. Cities like Sofia, Belgrade, or Moscow continued to grow at a breathtaking pace. Yet it seems that even in the socialist countries the age of great planning and modernist optimism ended.[35] More often the observers of urban life would perceive the ambivalences that Mark D. Steinberg found in fin-de-siècle St. Petersburg. Some of the most pressing social problems that had marred urban life at the outset of classical modernity were resolved. The race to modernity had produced results, albeit often at a high price and in a different way than initially imagined. The great authoritarian visions of the twentieth century have turned from an object of awe and admiration to an object of study. The postmodern era is certainly more skeptical of the grand designs that once fascinated our great-grandfathers.[36] Still, reflective modernization, the obsession with models—of course never fully implemented—and comparisons, the attempt to find one's future in other geographical settings is a lesson the Eastern European metropolis can teach, and it is as relevant as ever.

By concentrating on capital cities, some aspects of urban modernity in Eastern Europe—for example, the phenomenon of the new city, from Gdynia in Poland to Magnitogorsk in Soviet Russia—could not be addressed in this volume.[37] Moreover, by focusing on aspects of modernization the continuities of peasant life, which to this day are part of Eastern European metropolitan life, are only touched upon.[38] The changes brought by modernity are more strongly emphasized than the continuities, especially the ability of

[35] Lebow, *Unfinished Utopia*; Bohn, *Von der* "*europäischen Stadt.*"

[36] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*; Böhme, "'Stadtutopien' und 'Stadtwirklichkeit,'" 68–91; Bruyn, *Die Diktatur der Philanthropen*.

[37] Kargon et al., *Invented Edens*; for the specific but no less remarkable example of Zlín, see Nerdinger, *Zlín*; Klingan et al., *A Utopia of Modernity*; and for the Soviet case of Magnitogorsk, see Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*.

[38] See, for example, Economakis, *From Peasant to Petersburger*; and Hoffmann, *Peasant Metropolis*.

Eastern European metropolitan cities to survive during times of crises. Many of the places studied in this volume had to make several "comebacks" after shattering urban catastrophes.[39] This is also an integral part of the modern legacy in Eastern Europe. Another legacy of the region that is still not well understood is the success story and continuity of planning.[40] Overshadowed by evident planning disasters of the postwar period, places like Warsaw remain focal points of integral planning reaching far beyond the city and urban infrastructure. These efforts were not yet labeled socialist, although the continuity in personnel is striking.

In the twenty-first century, the race to modernity is taking place farther east. Few places in Eastern Europe are still trying to reinvent themselves. Moscow might be one of the examples where grand designs are still part of urban development. Most of the other metropolitan areas studied here seem saturated or have taken a much more modest, market-driven path. Today the arenas of great plans, immense urban problems, and phenomenal growth rates have shifted to the authoritarian states of Asia. Both the Gulf States and China are part of this race to modernity. Many of their projects exhibit similarities to high modernity in Eastern Europe, often on an even grander scale. There again, Western experts are using the opportunity to implement their aesthetic and architectural visions. Once again regimes try to bolster their legitimacy by embracing urban modernity. Still, there are also important differences to Eastern Europe's entry into modernity. The Western city—London, Paris, or even New York—is no longer the model. The Asian metropolis has become an urban entity sui generis, a place that can hardly be gauged by Western standards.

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[39] Hoffmann et al., "Introduction," 308–13.
[40] Laak, "Planung," 305–26.

cussions at both venues. These workshops were important steps in our own attempt to understand urban history, where Thomas Mergel (Berlin) and Dieter Schott (Darmstadt) gave important keynote speeches. We would like to thank them as well as Clemens Zimmermann (Saarbrücken) and Malte Rolf (Bamberg) for the stimulating questions they raised.

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9. *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*: Radical Urbanism and the International Discourse on Planning in the Interwar Period

Martin Kohlrausch

Little was lacking for Warsaw to become for a short but significant moment the center of modern architecture. Early in 1933 it became apparent that the CIAM IV congress, the fourth meeting of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) could not be staged, as planned, in Moscow. One year earlier, Stalin had publicly changed the official art policy to Socialist Realism, thus excluding the more avant-garde currents of architecture from the sphere of the officially accepted. CIAM, the self-declared spearhead of the modernist movement in architecture, had thus lost the basis for a convention in the USSR.

For the young CIAM organization this was disappointing in at least two ways: the CIAM IV congress had been prepared for some three years and was meant to achieve a synthesis of the work done so far under the overarching topic of "the functional city." Thus, the organization's comprehensive claim to develop solutions to the various problems of modern societies—reaching far beyond the built environment—was to be documented. For this purpose, and this was the second setback, Moscow seemed to be an exceptionally well-suited place. Since around 1930, different groups of Western architects had been working in the Soviet Union, fascinated by seemingly grandiose prospects to shape a new society via huge building projects up to the scale of whole new cities. Plans for the rebuilding of Moscow, in particular the international competition

for the Palace of the Soviets, had attracted attention far beyond the Soviet Union.[1]

But at the same time Warsaw attracted the attention of CIAM leaders. The Polish capital was not only on the itinerary to Moscow, but here too, if not in such a dramatic manner as in the USSR, there seemed to be a promising experimentation field for CIAM's urbanistic and architectural concepts. At a meeting in Warsaw in December 1932, Polish CIAM members had energetically stressed precisely this point. In this interpretation the metropolis on the Vistula River figured as an urban environment between the huge changes in the ideologically motivated yet constrained Soviet Union and the saturated Western nations, in which the basic course of urbanistic development was already set before World War I. Warsaw thus seemed almost the natural substitute for Moscow. Indeed, preparations for a congress in the Polish capital had already begun when in May 1933 CIAM's presidency opted for the attractive option of a Mediterranean cruise from Marseille to Athens as the new setting for the congress. However, this did not change anything in the central role Warsaw was to play at the congress, at least indirectly.

Urban planning in Warsaw is, like in every metropolis, an extremely complex matter. This chapter does not aim to deliver a comprehensive study of the topic. Rather, it focuses on how new urban schemes of Warsaw were communicated in an international environment, in particular an example both radical and telling: the so-called *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* (Functional Warsaw) plan of 1933/34, a direct result of the CIAM IV congress.

A comprehensive overview of this topic is a topic further complicated by the extremely scarce research literature, which predominantly offers one-dimensional (though not generally wrong) explanations.[2] The bleak picture of the city's past in the Russian Empire before World War I—a practice not uncommon for other cities in the region—is contrasted with the purported steady ascent

[1] Bodenschatz et al., *Städtebau im Schatten Stalins*; Gestwa, "Technik als Kultur der Zukunft," 37–73. See, in particular, the examples of Le Corbusier: Cohen, *Le Corbusier*, and of Ernst May: Flier, "Possibly the Greatest Task," 157–95.

[2] See, e.g., the recent and very well-informed overview: Jankiewicz et al., "Tradycje urbanistyczne Warszawy," 34–59. The best introduction in English is Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*.

of Warsaw to its quasi-natural metropolitan status in post-1918 Europe.[3] In particular the name of the last president of Warsaw, Stefan Starzyński (1934–1939), stands, in this strand of the literature, for the reality and chances of urban progress.[4]

It is particularly striking how little is known about the leading urbanists and architects behind the dynamic changes of Warsaw's urban fabric and how rarely interwar Warsaw is placed in a broader European picture.[5] This is even more evident when one takes into consideration the significance of Warsaw as one of the biggest—in terms of population—and economically important places of the region in question.

In my examination of what I term "radical urbanism," I refer to both the specific situation of Warsaw and the challenges it faced, but also to selected solutions presented, and, as I argue, to some extent deliberately presented, in a radical outlook. The chapter thus exposes the degree of reflection—e.g., the fashioning of the urban crisis—which in itself is significant for my argument.[6] In doing so, aspects of urban planning in Warsaw that point beyond the city itself are highlighted. The chapter also demonstrates how strongly the professional standing of the involved architects and urbanists and the development and planning of the metropolitan city Warsaw were intertwined.

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[3] Prokopovych, "Lemberg (Lwów, L'viv) Architecture," 100–29.

[4] Drozdowski, *Starzyński*. More traditional accounts on urbanism in Warsaw can be found in Fisher, *City and Regional Planning*; Kowalewski, *Warszawa* (both with a focus on the communist period), and Knapp, *Aglomeracja Warszawska*; Szwankowski, *Warszawa*; Leśniakowska, *Architektura w Warszawie*; Drozdowski et al., *Warszawa w latach*.

[5] The increasing literature on avant-gardes in Poland after 1918 offers the best starting point. See, in particular, Miłobędzki, *Architecture and Avant-garde*; Parlagreco, *Costruttivismo in Polonia*; Schuler et al., *Der neue Staat*; Nowakowska-Sito, *Wyprawa w dwudziestolecie*.

[6] It is not by chance that Czesław Miłosz's account of his life from the late 1990s contains an entry on the topic center-periphery: Miłosz, *Mein ABC*. See also Jedlicki, *A Suburb of Europe*.

The Late Metropolis: Urban Crisis and Urban Planning in Warsaw after 1916

The formation of Polish statehood in 1918 out of the territories occupied by the partition powers bore challenges that surpassed those of all other new or semi-new states in Central Europe after the Great War. The process was not restricted to establishing new institutions and had to be achieved in the face of extreme economic problems resulting from the backwardness of large parts of the country, dramatic war devastations, and the infrastructure problems caused by the partitions.[7] In addition, significant parts of the former academic, technical, and administrative elites had left the country, returning to Russia, Austria, and Germany.[8]

All these problems converged in the cities, even more so as, particularly in eastern Poland, different processes coincided that had unfolded consecutively in Western Europe. In Poland the main phase of urbanization was still in full swing in the interwar period.[9] This means that city expansion—similar for example to Berlin in 1920—was not only a measure that "changed administrative competences, but not the mode of urban life."[10] In fact, at least in Warsaw the very structure of the city was still shapeable to an extent no longer true for Western capitals in the twentieth century.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the prospects for the growth of Warsaw seemed good. Ferdinand de Lesseps, the builder of the Suez Canal, even predicted that Warsaw would become the biggest European city in the twentieth century "due to the fact that this is the place where east meets west and where the most colossal exchange to be imagined, the exchange between the continents,

[7] It is estimated that due to war damages in the years between 1914 and 1921, 1,837,000 buildings were destroyed on the territory of the Second Polish Republic. Minorski, *Polska nowatorska*. On the general economic problems, see Turnock, *Economy of East Central Europe*, and Berend, *Decades of Crisis*.

[8] Loose, "How to Run a State," 145–59.

[9] In 1925 the degree of urbanization in Poland was only 30 percent, compared to 50 percent in the Weimar Republic. Cf. Żarnowski, *Polska 1918–1939*. On the different paths of urbanization in Europe, see the introduction to Lenger et al., *Die europäische Stadt*.

[10] Peukert, *Weimarer Republik*, 181–82.

would take place."[11] Exaggerated as it may seem from today's perspective, at the time it was not a stand-alone opinion. Polish statistics estimated in 1912 that Warsaw's populace would grow from some 850,000 to 4.6 million in the fifty years to come—thus quintupling.[12]

Both, the reality of growth and the expectation of progress, originated from Warsaw's geographical position within the Russian Empire and the huge accessible market.[13] But the massive problems Warsaw faced in the interwar period largely stemmed from its Russian period. Warsaw's status as a fortified city with almost no autonomy had prohibited significant and planned enlargements (as opposed to uncontrolled expansion) and resulted in a massive overcrowding of the city.[14] With more than 100,000 inhabitants per square kilometer in its central districts, Warsaw featured the densest population in Europe on the eve of World War I.[15] Its average of almost four persons occupying one room was unmatched, at least in Central Europe. The quality of housing moreover was poor, as was the state of infrastructure. In addition, the former garrison and commercial city had to be transformed into a capital on a European scale, in particular in view of the challenging international situation of the new Polish state striving for legitimacy.

In this situation of extreme pressure to solve urban problems and a coinciding lack of established experts and knowledge, the new discipline of town planning inevitably gained tremendous significance.[16] Tellingly, the first measures to improve the urban situation,

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[11] Majewski, *Warszawa nieodbudowana*.

[12] Martyn, "Emerging Metropolises," 140–42. General information on the development of the populace is provided in Strzelecki, "Ludność Warszawy," 9–28; Drozdowski, "Skład i struktura," 29–59.

[13] Cf. Martyn, "Emerging Metropolises," 140–42.

[14] Even in 1936 the average number of people occupying an apartment was 3.7 compared to 2.1 in Berlin and 1.8 in London—the latter both being cities that hardly could claim to have solved their housing problems. According to official statistics, in 1927 five persons occupied an average living space of 22 square meters. Turowski, "From Workers' Estates," 48–60.

[15] Malisz, "Functional Warsaw," 254–69; Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*.

[16] On the late development of town planning as a discipline, see Ward, *Planning the Twentieth-Century City*.

initiated by Tadeusz Tołwiński, were already taken under the German occupation during World War I.[17] In 1916 the Warsaw Polytechnic reopened, featuring a new faculty of architecture.[18] At the same time, a first sketch for a master plan of Warsaw was compiled as an attempt to consolidate the highly fractured city. In 1919 a commission of both national and local officials was formed with the task of matching the master plans and the much more complex reality.[19]

Based on the master plans, town planner Stanisław Różański developed a "master scheme" in 1927, which was to serve as a model for the whole country.[20] Różański, who was trained in the United States, became head of the Regional Planning Office for Greater Warsaw in 1930 and developed the first regional planning scheme for Poland—one of the first in Europe.[21] He next advanced to the position of head of the newly established Warsaw Planning Office, one of the largest urban planning bodies in Europe, which provided him with the means to launch his ambitious plans.

Already those responsible for the first master plan were able to build on new planning instruments, which had been developed in the previous two decades in Western Europe and the United States.[22] Moreover, it is striking to note that Różański's new schemes, in tune

[17] Their main task was the comprehensive statistical evaluation of the given state. Szczypiorski, "Samorząd Warszawy," 83–116. On Tołwiński see Kotaszewicz, "Tadeusz Tołwiński," 273–86; Czyzewski, "Town and Regional Planning," 38–47.

[18] Noakowski, "Powstanie wydziału architektury," 29–32.

[19] Koło Architektów w Warszawie, *Uwagi do szkicu wstępnego planu regulacyjnego miasta st. Warszawy, Warsaw* (1916); see also Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*; Tadeusz Tołwiński, "Uwagi o szkicowym projekcie zabudowania Wielkiej Warszawy," *Przegląd Techniczny* 43, no. 18 (1917): 214.

[20] Poland was the first European state, with the exception of the Soviet Union, that established a national policy of town, regional, and countrywide planning: Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*, 162.

[21] Stanisław Różański, "Plan ogólny wielkiej Warszawy," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 11 (1928): 410–15.

[22] Tadeusz Tołwiński studied, for example, at Karlsruhe Polytechnic. Klain, "City Planning in Warsaw," 112–27. For the reception of international examples see Józef Jankowski, "Regulacja miast i planowanie regionalne w związku z budownictwem mieszkaniowym. (Sprawozdanie z międzynarodowego kongresu urbanistycznego w Wiedniu, 9 września 1926)," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 1, no. 3 (1927): 30–33.

with the state of the art in urban planning, directly addressed the deficits of the prewar era—they made use of the huge, largely state-owned open space beyond the northern fortifications of the city, for example.[23] Stressing the scale of urban problems, Różański was quick to highlight the potential of modern urban planning methods. From the beginning Różański, who placed a strong emphasis on publicizing his convictions, positioned Warsaw among the foremost European capitals like London, Vienna, Paris, and Berlin in order to stress deficits, but also to enlist support for his planning efforts.[24]

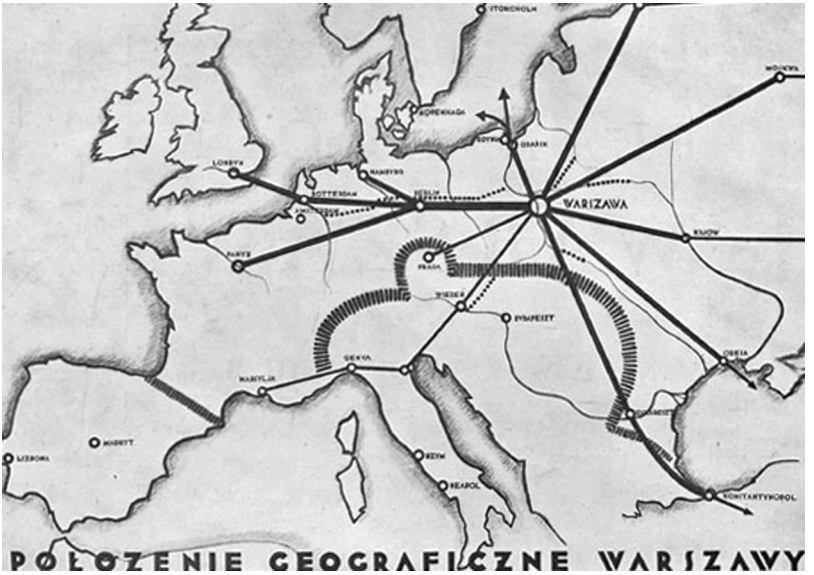

Figure 9.1. International importance of the capital city of Warsaw. Source: Stanisław Różański, "Plan ogólny wielkiej Warszawy," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 11 (1928): 410–38, 410.

[23] Temporarily, three-fifths of all newly erected apartment buildings in Warsaw were constructed in the northern district of Żoliborz. Cegielski, "Budownictwo mieszkaniowe," 117–40. On the Nowy Żoliborz estates, see Heyman, *Nowy Żoliborz*.

[24] Stanisław Różański, "Plan ogólny wielkiej Warszawy," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 11 (1928): 410–38; Edgar Norwerth, "'Kompozycja' w regulacje Warszawy," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 5, no. 3 (1929): 84–94. See also Różański's own account some forty years later: Stanisław Różański, "Planowanie przestrzenne Warszawy 1916–1939," 321–46.

Różański pointed out a number of factors which, in his eyes, defined Warsaw's development and held enormous chances. First, the geographical connections that turned the city into an international center of trade, supported by the strong presence of industrial companies, and second, the city's status as capital of Poland, including its representational function and its role as a cultural, administrative, and military center.[25] Both factors resulted in high population density, which in turn caused three further problems: housing shortage, urban hygiene, and traffic.

Although the second and third point, in Różański's view, did not deserve special attention, the geographical setup was decisive. Warsaw was a center of material and immaterial exchange from west to east via railway, air traffic, and waterways. Yet contemporary Warsaw, Różański argued, was not up to the challenges posed and chances provided by this situation.

In sum, one can identify four specifics of urban planning in Warsaw until the 1930s:

1. There was an intermingling of state and municipal activity with a strong bias toward the central authorities. In the years after 1918, federal institutions like the Ministry of Public Works became and remained major players in all town planning initiatives in Warsaw. This had structural reasons (the lack of a well-developed self-administration, the top-down reestablishment of the Polish state in 1918, and the state-centered tradition of the Russian Empire), but also resulted from the character of Warsaw as the capital and most dynamic city of the new state. In 1925 Oskar Sosnowski, founder of the Union of Polish Urbanists (Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich) and head of the department for Polish architecture at Warsaw Polytechnic, argued that although Warsaw-based architects (Koło Architektów) had taken the first initiative to seize the urban chances of Warsaw, it was now up to the government to create the conditions for a "policy of recovery" (*polityka uzdrowienia*) and a rational develop-

[25] Drozdowski, "Die Rolle Warschaus," 243–67.

ment.[26] The Piłsudski regime, established under the slogan *Sanacja* (healing) in 1926, directly and significantly intervened several times in order to mitigate the dramatic housing situation.[27] What is clear here is the exceptionally strong link between political legitimacy and tackling the capital's dramatic urban problems.[28] This link was perhaps most evident in the case of Starzyński.[29]

2. Warsaw's urban extension quadrupled between 1916 and 1939,[30] which exceeds the developments of any other Central European city of this size. While the populations of Prague, Berlin, or Budapest grew only slightly, the number of inhabitants almost doubled in Warsaw from some 700,000 after the Russian retreat in 1915 to around 1,300,000 and 1,900,000 within the so-called Metropolitan Complex in 1939.[31] On the one hand, exceptional growth posed challenges for the state power in the region. On the other, it was the driving force for the city's dynamic development.
3. This both resulted in and promoted huge planning efforts and cemented the strong and specific role of planning in Warsaw, which had a tendency toward sweeping measures. To some extent this preference for the grand design might have been influenced, at least until the mid-1930s, by the severe lack of detailed information, which was part and parcel of role models

[26] Oskar Sosnowski, *Powstanie, układ i cechy charakterystyczne sieci ulicznej na obszarze wielkiej Warszawy* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Zakładu Architektury Polskiej Politechniki Warszawskiej, 1930); Oskar Sosnowski, "Zakład Architektury Polskiej Politechniki Warszawskiej," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2, no. 5 (1925/26): 3–23; Miłobędzki, "Oskar Sosnowski," 131–38.

[27] The latter was seen as a potential source of political upheaval, causing the regime to provide considerable resources for the solution of urbanistic problems in Warsaw. From 1919 on, housing was part of the annual national budget. See Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*, 176–77.

[28] Ibid., 162–72. On local politics, see Kamieniecki, *Historycy i politycy warszawscy*.

[29] See the pertaining reflection by Starzyński in Jankiewicz et al., "Tradycje urbanistyczne Warszawy." On Starzyński's four-year-plan for the development of Warsaw: Drozdowski, *Starzyński*. Generally on capital urbanism as a field to attain political legitimacy: Sonne, *Representing the State*, 29–49.

[30] Jankiewicz et al., "Tradycje urbanistyczne Warszawy," 34–59.

[31] Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*, 159, 175.

like urban planning in Amsterdam after 1918.[32] Not least of all for this reason, implementation proved to be a constant problem. The conception of new plans and the compilation of instruments for their implementation at best went hand in hand. It is also because of this twofold task of planning and assessment that the planning bodies established in Warsaw from about 1930 reached a size and also a professional quality only matched by very few other European metropolitan cities. By 1939 the Warsaw Planning Office had enlisted more than 400 employees, most of them engineers.[33]

4. All these developments have to be seen against the background of—and in strong interconnection with—the international discussion on town planning.[34] This resulted in the use of state-of-the-art planning instruments like zoning and green belts for tackling basic challenges like the largely unorganized urban sprawl in Warsaw. It also included innovate elements like the *Superdzielnice* (super districts), self-contained residential districts intended to help decentralize administration, commercial activity, and traffic. Last, it is important to note an early orientation toward regional planning.[35]

Although it contains new and innovative elements and is unique in its wide range and broad claim of problem solving, what can be called the Różański tradition of urban planning still remained within the mainstream of international discussion and development. The main goals were at the same time a cleaning up of the urban pattern and catching up.[36] After all, Różański was a civil servant

[32] Somer, *The Functional City*.

[33] Jankiewicz et al., "Tradycje urbanistyczne Warszawy," 34–59.

[34] See also Rychliński, *Wybór pism*. For background information see Sutcliffe, *Towards the Planned City*; Albers, *Zur Entwicklung der Stadtplanung in Europa*; Saunier, "Transatlantic Connections," 11–24, http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/16/83/09/PDF/transatlantic_connections_IMS_HAL.pdf (accessed 6 April 2014).

[35] "Planowanie regionalne w okręgu warszawskim," *DOM* 9 (1938): 3–56.

[36] Kazimierz Saski, "Planowanie Miast w Polsce w Okresie Powojennym," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2, no. 6 (1925/26): 4–28; Faryna-Paszkiewicz, "Reprezentacyjna architektura," 203–13.

who constantly had to negotiate between local and national authorities, thus leveling out all too radical propositions. What is even more characteristic is that both Różański's and Sosnowski's elaborations on Warsaw's future share a common feature: they assume the quasi-natural metropolitan character of Warsaw, which so far was, in their eyes, only thwarted by urbanistic incompetence and missed opportunities, namely of the Russian administration before World War I. Both urbanists stressed the geographic assets of Warsaw, its central position at the intersection of international traffic routes, and its dynamic development. Warsaw was, as Sosnowski concluded in a characteristic statement, a capital city in a "state of potentiality" (*stanie potencjonalnym*).[37]

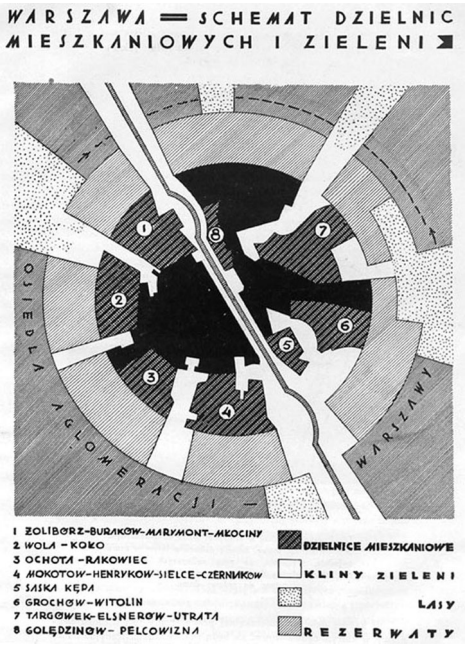

Figure 9.2. The scheme of the residential areas and green areas for the plan of the capital city of Warsaw. Source: Stanisław Różański, "Plan ogólny wielkiej Warszawy," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 11 (1928): 410–38, 410.

[37] Oskar Sosnowski, *Powstanie, układ i cechy charakterystyczne sieci ulicznej na obszarze wielkiej Warszawy* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Zakładu Architektury Polskiej Politechniki Warszawskiej, 1930).

Architects, Other Players, and the Communication of Architecture in Poland

Różański's example combines some of the most striking characteristics of architects and urban planners in Warsaw. Undoubtedly, the planning needs in reaction to a complex urban crisis offered enormous chances for architects. Warsaw was not—particularly in comparison to cities in Czechoslovakia—a simple success story of the modern movement.[38] But one can clearly discern the rise of a particular brand of architects who were more than mere building experts, who had a theoretical and urbanist capacity and an international background typical of the modern movement.

Architects gained impressively both in numbers and in relevance in Poland between 1918 and 1939.[39] However, it was a certain type that was particularly present in the urban planning debates of the late 1920s and 1930s. Such "new" types like Edgar Norwerth,[40] Szymon Syrkus, or Stanisław and Barbara Brukalscy reacted to new technical trends, were open to the social dimension of architecture, were ready and able to publicly explain their ideas, and were internationally well connected and very aware of recent international trends and projects.[41]

Another type worth mentioning is represented by Teodor Toeplitz and Stanisław Tołwiński. Both were instrumental in the foundation and development of Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa, the

[38] Anna, *Das Bauhaus im Osten*; Anděl et al., *New Vision*; Nerdinger, *Zlín*; Klingan et al., *A Utopia of Modernity*.

[39] From 169 in 1919 to 1,042 in 1939, see Minorski, *Polska nowatorska*, 183; see also Barucki, *Fragmenty stuletniej historii*; Zachwatowicz, *Warszawska szkoła architektury*.

[40] See, for example, Edgar Norwerth, "Edukacja Architektoniczna w Rosji Dzisiejszej," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2, no. 5 (1925/26): 26–33; Edgar Norwerth, "Wystawa Międzynarodowa Architektury Nowoczesnej," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 1, no. 4 (1925/26): 37–38; Edgar Norwerth, "Przesłanki socjologiczne architektury współczesnej," *Droga* 1–2 (1927): 108–13. On Norwerth: Rotkiewicz, "Wielki samotnik," 2–4.

[41] A. Gravier, "Zjazd Międzynarodowego Kongresu Architektów," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2, no. 12 (1926): 22–27; Kazimierz Saski, "Sprawy urbanistyczne na Międzynarodowym Kongresie mieszkaniowym i budowy miast w Paryżu r. 1928," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 10 (1928): 367–75.

most important housing cooperative in Warsaw.[42] Tellingly, at different stages both became members of CIAM and belonged to the small group of nonarchitects within the organization. This was due to their specific qualification as intermediary figures between architecture, economy, and general social reform. They provided the statistics and data, often from an international context, for the far-reaching projects aiming to solve not only architectural problems in the narrower sense. But they also organized funds and established contacts with the political decision makers.[43] Again, it is apparent how the pronounced economic and social crisis in Warsaw and the rise of architects and town planners of a certain strand went hand in hand.

If one looks at the journals *Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie* (DOM) and in particular *Architektura i Budownictwo* (AiB), both founded in the second half of the 1920s, one finds various examples of this trend. In comparison to the respective German journals, the proportion of international references in AiB was much higher, and not only in the extensive sections specially devoted to foreign journals.[44] One can also distinguish an extreme preference for the technical and social dimension of architecture, including in particular housing,[45] while questions of style played a proportionally less important role.[46]

This international orientation had different reasons. One of them was the trivial fact that almost all eminent planners and architects of

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[42] Mazur, "Żoliborz—dzielnica obietnic," 140–63; Caumanns, "Mietskasernen und 'Gläserne Häuser,'" 205–24.

[43] See Teodor Toeplitz, "Nowe sposoby budowania," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 4 (1928): 129–47. See also Stanisław Tołwiński's autobiography, *Wspomnienia, 1895–1939* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwa Naukowe, 1970), wherein he reflects on the role of Polish architects in CIAM. See also Chyra-Rolicz, *Stanisław Tołwiński*.

[44] See, e.g., the series on contemporary Dutch architecture (AiB 1930), Swiss architecture (AiB 1930), or German sport facilities architecture (AiB, issue 4 [1930]). Le Corbusier's *urbanisme* was reviewed twice in AiB (issues 10 and 11 [1925/26]). The Weissenhof exhibition was also covered extensively two times in 1927. (See also the chapter by Elitza Stanoeva in this volume.)

[45] Aleksander Raniecki, "Dział Mieszkaniowy Wystawy 'Mieszkanie i Miasto,'" *Architektura i Budownictwo* 2, no. 6 (1925/26): 29–35.

[46] See in particular the journal DOM. See also the examples in AiB, issues 2 and 3 (1928).

the interwar period received an international education because of the absence of a Polish state and the lack of relevant Polish institutions before 1918. Those architects working in Poland after 1918 and born before 1890 had been educated at more than forty different architectural schools, most of them abroad.[47] This was also true for the graduates of the architecture faculty of Warsaw Polytechnic. Its curriculum reflected different international trends of architectural and urbanist training.[48]A second reason for international collaboration was the scarcity of established knowhow.

At least as important was the specific Polish situation after 1918. As a reestablished nation, Poland needed legitimacy. In particular the new/old capital was a showcase that had to prove progress when compared to such established national centers as Berlin, Paris, or London.[49] For this reason it made more sense and was more effective to employ international references in Warsaw and Poland than, say, Paris or London, although the mechanism was certainly also common in other places. Particularly the highly charged debate on housing depended on comparisons with examples from other countries.[50]

After all, urbanism—as in other places—was a highly publicized matter that besides journals, newspapers, and pamphlets relied strongly on exhibitions as a forum to advance its goals. The first Różański plan was presented at the national exhibition in Poznań in 1929.

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[47] Minorski, *Polska nowatorska*. This was, in many respects, a general phenomenon in East-Central Europe. See Kohlrausch et al., "Expert Cultures in Central Eastern Europe," 9–30.

[48] Kłosiewicz, "Modernizm polski," 84–95; Zachwatowicz, *Warszawska szkoła architektury*.

[49] See the pertaining reflection by Starzyński in Jankiewicz et al., "Tradycje urbanistyczne Warszawy." See also Czesław Olszewski, *Warszawa Nowoczesna. Fotografie z Lat Trzydziestych XX wieku, Warszawa 2012* (Warszawa: Raster, 2012).

[50] See Szymon Syrkus, "Fabrykacja Osiedli," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 4, no. 8 (1928): 277–98. For the example of traffic, see Tadeusz Pogorski, "Zagadnienia komunikacyjne wielkiego miasta," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 3, no. 7 (1927): 218–25.

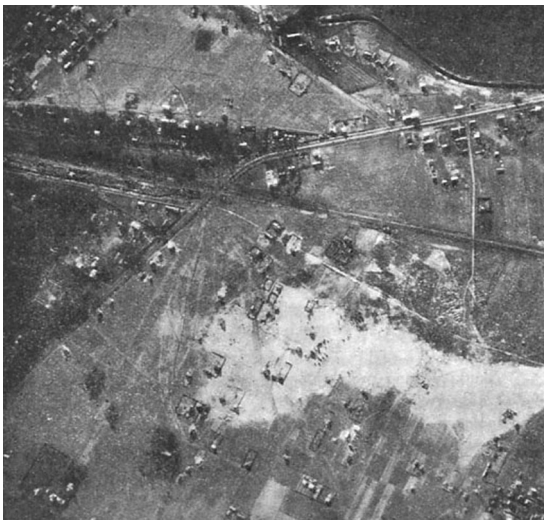

Figure 9.3. Absence of a regional plan for the gradual development of a district. Source: Stanisław Różański, *Zagadnienia rozwoju Warszawy i jej regjonu*, Warszawa 1935, 9.

After Stefan Starzyński had become president of Warsaw in 1934, he tried to emphasize the dramatic reality as well as future prospects in order to enlist support for his far-reaching plans—in exhibitions such as "Warsaw yesterday, today, tomorrow," and especially for the planned world exhibition in Warsaw in 1943.[51] In AiB, new plans for the capital, accompanied by the excessive use of often very suggestive illustrations, were a common feature.

Communicating architecture in such exhibitions highlights the fact that technical planning and the communication of planning

[51] On the exhibition "Warsaw yesterday…," see Jarosław Tribuś, *Warszawa Niezaistniała. Niezrealizowane projekty urbanistyczne i architektoniczne dwudziestolecia międzywojennego* (Warsaw: Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego, 2012), 262–75. For the Poznań exhibition, see AiB 4, issue 11 (1928). For another widely received exhibition, see Wynot, *Warsaw between the World Wars*, 166. For Starzyński's intentional use of pictures of slum-like areas in order to pressure for urban renewal, see Karolina Lewandowska, ed., *Dokumentalistki: Polskie fotografki XX wieku* (Warszawa: BOSZ, [1968] 2008). For the plan of the world exhibition in Warsaw, see Olszewski, "Architektura Warszawy 1919–1939," 287–320.

cannot be separated and that this communication was of utmost importance to gain support beyond the profession.[52] It is also interesting to see—beyond the international integration of AiB—that the journal was founded with the deliberate aim of linking the professional discourse to the new capital Warsaw and to claim new tasks for architects in fields like hygiene, health, sport, and housing reform.[53]

Warszawa Funkcjonalna

In this environment modernist architects and urbanists drew up a plan that reflects almost all of the characteristics outlined so far. This was one of the most remarkable planning documents of the interwar period with the catchy and internationally easily adaptable title *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*.[54] Its authors were the avant-garde architect Szymon Syrkus and the urban planner Jan Olaf Chmielewski.[55] Both were members of CIAM, which was founded in 1928 by Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius, among others.[56] Two weeks after CIAM I convened in La Sarraz, the congress's general secretary Sigfried Giedion invited the Polish architects Syrkus and Józef Szanajca to collaborate in CIAM's "central committee"—CIRPAC (Comité International pour la Résolution des Problèmes de l'Architecture Contemporaine). Syrkus and Szanajca had con-

[52] In 1954, the writer Leopold Tyrmand stressed the visionary value of the Warsaw's exhibition. Tyrmand, *Dziennik 1954*.

[53] Raniecki, "Dział Mieszkaniowy"; Alfred Lauterbach, "Zagadnienia Wielkiego Miasta," *Architektura i Budownictwo* 1, no. 2 (1925/26): 15–23; Śleboda, "Architektura sportowa dwudziestolecia międzywojennego w Polsce," 147–87.

[54] Jan Chmielewski, Szymon Syrkus, *Warszawa funkcjonalna* (Warszawa: Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich, 1934). The text is now available in a very instructive new and commented edition: Chmielewski et al., *Warszawa funkcjonalna*.

[55] Besides Różański, Chmielewski was one of the main advocates of far-reaching ideas for the systematic use of land and speaker of the leading group of urban planners—U. On Chmielewski, see Kotarbinski, "The Developing Career," 6–12; on Syrkus see the work by his wife Helena Syrkus, *Ku idei osiedla społecznego*.

[56] On CIAM in general, see Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse*; Steinmann, *CIAM*.

vinced CIAM celebrities with their contribution to the competition for the League of Nations building. In the years to come, the Polish CIAM members formed one of the largest and most active regional groups. During the thematic CIAM II in 1929 in Frankfurt, which focused on the "minimum dwelling," Polish contributions from cooperative housing organizations served as examples, and again at the CIAM III congress in Brussels in the following year.[57]

In particular these later solutions developed by Syrkus and his wife Helena sparked great interest. Gropius, for example, had these plans analyzed by the Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen (Reich Research Society for Economic Viability in Construction and Housing).[58] What intrigued CIAM members from the West most were the radical attempts to find solutions to the dramatic housing situation in Warsaw, in particular to its social dimension.[59] For this very reason, in turn, international attempts to rationalize housing construction possessed an extremely high relevance for Poland—often even more so than for the countries where these solutions had originally been developed.[60]

The connection between the specific situation in Poland and the solutions offered by CIAM is even more pronounced in the discussion on the functional city, that is a city ordered according to functional criteria and divided into "zones" for dwelling, work, transportation, and recreation—one of the big topics in the discourse on urban planning in the 1930s.[61] CIAM intensively discussed the topic from 1931 on and especially at the 1933 CIAM IV congress in Athens. Under the heading of "the functional city," the regional groups presented thirty-four cities, one of which was Warsaw.

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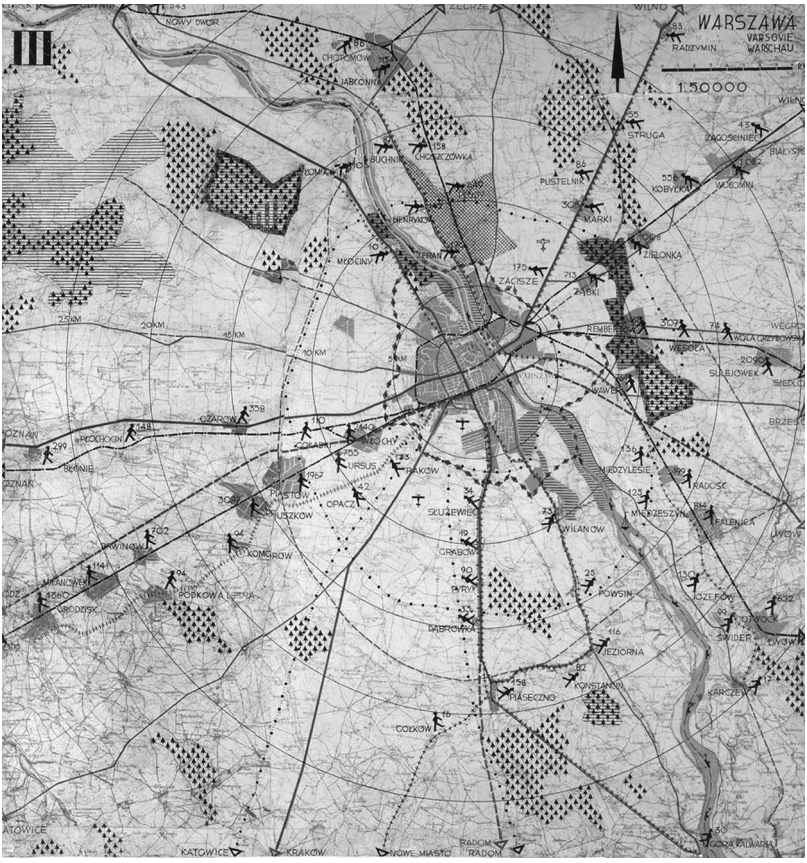
[57] Roguska, "The Radical Avant-garde," 17–18.

[58] Czaplinska-Archer, "Polish Architecture," 37–44.

[59] Cf. Czerner et al., *Avant-garde polonaise*.

[60] Roguska, "The Radical Avant-garde." The newly erected apartment buildings in the northern districts of Warsaw served as model projects to test ideas that were discussed at the CIAM congresses. See Klain, "City Planning in Warsaw."

[61] Le Corbusier, *La ville radieuse. Eléments d'une doctrine d'urbanisme pour l'équipment de la civilisation machiniste: Paris, Geneve, Rio de Janeiro* (Boulogne, Seine: Éditions de l'architecture aujourd'hui, 1935). See also Hilpert, *Le Corbusiers* "*Charta von Athen.*"



Map 9.1. Map of Warsaw for CIAM IV Congress; courtesy of CIAM-archive, gta archive, Zurich.

The *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* plan was, on the one hand, a product of Chmielewski's planning background. On the other, it showed Syrkus's talent to suggestively place topics in public discourse and to press ahead with his vision at the interface of politics, architecture, and the public. In this sense *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* provides a perfect example for the connection between the Polish situation with its specific problems and the international discussion of architecture and urban planning. In particular, the concept reacted to the idea of the functional city and thus served as an extreme example of the trends described above.

Tellingly, the text starts off with architects rather than buildings or an urban pattern: "The work of architects is based on projecting, that is the planned conception of the future." The authors claim that in order to reestablish this function the "crippling of the profession," caused by the economic needs of the day, would have to be overcome. Throughout, the authors argue in favor of a planned economy with functionalist urbanism as its logical consequence and architects in a leading position. It seems justified to describe this vision as a socialist city, though not in the Soviet sense.

In a next characteristic step, Chmielewski and Syrkus, the latter closely connected to the political left, declared that this conclusion in no way derived from their local conditions, but rather from their collaboration with CIAM and its congresses in 1928, 1929, and 1933. The authors then distinguish different groups of cities, from which those that are the continuous objects of change based on various factors attract their attention. What they were looking for in the example of Warsaw are the factors and conditions of growth and the ability to cope with a crisis situation. They regarded the functional planning of dealing with these aspects essential, but at the same time only considered this possible when distinguishing between fixed and dynamic or changing factors. In stressing movement and consequently distinguishing between static and adjustable criteria, the city appeared in flux. As fixed factors, the authors mainly regarded:

- Warsaw's position at the intersection of intercontinental traffic arteries (neglecting the political realities east and west of the country);
- its combination of a developed industrial structure and easy access to commodities;
- its function as political center and center of consumption.

The next decisive and new feature of the concept was its vision of the city on a regional and even national and European level. Numerous illustrations underscored the notion of the metropolitan organism based on the directions of traffic and overcoming the old city's deformation of the natural traffic flow. In this they argued against what they perceived as the "tsarist impairment of the city's

backbone," but in particular against the mainstream planning that still dominated and was, in their eyes, caught up in the flawed urban pattern of the past.[62]

Based on the logic of traffic and equipped with the toolkit of functional city planning, Chmielewski and Syrkus envisioned the differences between town and countryside to be leveled by means of a broad zone branded *Warszawa Maksymalna* or Wmax, stretching some 100 kilometers north to south and east to west. They developed a new and easy-to-communicate system to depict statistical information, in particular in its dynamics. Warsaw was consequently presented as a city at the intersection of transcontinental traffic lines: "In our conception the scale of the region is interconnected to the scale of central Poland, Europe, and even the world in such a way that on pressing the key Żerań [one of the places in the concept to be developed] we hear the echo of Tłuszcz and Żyrardów—Moscow and Paris, and at the same time Modlin, Czersk, Stockholm, and Suez."[63]

The architects planned urban infrastructure at the intersections of major traffic arteries, which was meant to structure the wild settlements outside the inner city. They placed particular emphasis on establishments for the community.[64] This was regarded as essential for an active redefinition of the city and the claim to deeply changing the city.

Syrkus and Chmielewski admitted that the vision of a functionally organized Warsaw was utopian as long as real estate remained predominantly in private hands. The vision, however, should not entail neglecting the social conditions: "We do not want, like the technocrats, to get carried away by technical enthusiasm in order to forget the crisis, unemployment, and the homelessness of the masses. We know all too well that at this very moment, when production and consumption are in such disorder, and when the path-breaking social forces unfold such a dynamic, we can only theoretically prepare Warsaw for the future—the functional city."[65] Inter-

[62] Chmielewski et al., *Warszawa funkcjonalna*.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Malisz, "Functional Warsaw"; Czyzewski, "Town and Regional Planning."
[65] Chmielewski et al., *Warszawa funkcjonalna*.

estingly, however, and probably for the sake of the adaptability of the concept, there is no allusion to a specific political system.[66]

Figure 9.4. Zones of exploitation on the territory of Warszawa Max. Source: Jan Chmielewski and Szymon Syrkus, *Warszawa funkcjonalna*, Warszawa: Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich, 1934, Fig X.

In order to illustrate what they intended, the authors referred to Le Corbusier's *La Ville Radieuse* and Nikolai A. Miliutin's *Socgorod*. While taking into account obvious connections to Arturo Soria y Mata's *ciudad lineal* (1882) and Miliutin's *continuous city*

[66] There was, however, a positive view on a "planned economy" (ibid.).

(1930) as well as the plans for a *Stadtlandschaft* developed simultaneously for Hamburg, Bremen, and Stettin, Syrkus and Chmielewski undertook something new.[67] It is not so much the optimistic assessment of the development of the city, shifting between vision and hubris that is remarkable. Rather, it is striking how easily the attitude to be modern went hand in hand with the internationalist pretense of the study. The study gained its radical character—and the fascination it exerted beyond Poland's borders—from the dramatic gap between a critical urban situation and aspirations to accomplish a new European hybrid city.

This fascination could not have developed without the international sounding board the CIAM formed for Syrkus and Chmielewski. CIAM functioned as a producer of urban planning schemes, as a manifestation of the will to spread the idea of modern architecture, still diffuse in its outlook, and finally as a marketplace, an exchange of knowledge with a transnational structure.[68]

It seems as though the Polish group was more than others willing to adapt the main ideas proposed at Athens, namely that architecture had to be at its core functional in character and that the chaotic use of land had to be overcome in favor of a collective land use scheme.[69] Based on material presented in Athens, the Polish group was the only one—with the partial exception of Barcelona—to develop a concrete concept for a functional urban region within the framework of CIAM. Hence, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* became the main topic at the CIRPAC meeting in London in 1934.[70] Le Corbusier considered *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* a new step in the planning of huge areas, in particular because of the so-called focusing method, applied to increasing scales (district, city, country). Due to

[67] In the 1930s, Chmielewski used the term Warszawski Zespół Miejski, which can be translated as "town-complex Warsaw."

[68] CIAM only covers one section of the rapid internationalization of architecture in the interwar period. In particular the constructivist movement needs to be mentioned here. See Ingberman, *ABC*, and for the Polish case, see Stanislawski, "Die Bemühungen um eine internationale Künstlersolidarität," 248–54.

[69] On the central role Syrkus played within CIAM, see Chionne, "Blok e Praesens," 157–98.

[70] In addition to the members of the CIRPAC board, Raymond Unwin, Frederic Osborn, Patrick Abercrombie, and Hans Bernoulli participated in the meeting.

the fact that the study provided urban planners with far more tools than the Charta of Athens had foreseen, CIRPAC recommended *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* as a model study for large-scale urban and regional planning.[71] In a resolution signed by Gropius, Josep Lluís Sert, Le Corbusier, and Wells Coates, CIRPAC tried to pressure the president of Warsaw into implementing the scheme.[72]

Apparently, the study aroused such an intense response because Poland was presented as a kind of tabula rasa on which those more radical schemes that remained theory in the West could be practically realized. During the CIAM III discussion on low- versus high-rise buildings, Syrkus had vehemently advised against dealing with existing cities at all. In a discussion statement, Syrkus declared in the name of the Polish group: "I must stress that for many cities it [the discussion about the functional city] is not about utopian projects, planned in the blue. For us, for example, it is deeply needed, and if a functional city will come into existence, this may happen soon, and would then no longer be a utopia."[73] Indeed, in Warsaw many things were still in flux that were already fixed in the more developed Western European big cities, and could thus no longer be objects of functionalist planning. Moreover, the social dimension of architecture that was pronounced in all CIAM discussions was more urgent in Poland than in the West.

What comes to the fore here is CIAM as an organization that not only worked toward an exchange of knowledge, but also of reputation and appreciation. Local problems could advance to internationally recognized case studies. Conversely, international recognition could be channeled back into the local struggle for chances to realize one's concepts and ideas. What CIAM offered was particularly attractive considering the Polish situation. More so than other are-

[71] The board decided to have the document translated into English, German, and French. In 1935 a Spanish edition came out. Malisz, "Functional Warsaw," 257–58; Steinmann, *CIAM*. An in-depth record of the discussion is provided in Syrkus, "Warszawa funkcjonalna modelem dla CIAM," 78–80.

[72] The letter to Marian Zyndram-Kościałkowski is reprinted in Syrkus, *Ku idei osiedla społecznego*, 159.

[73] Steinmann, *CIAM*, 100–101, quotation on 116; see also Kohlrausch, "Die CIAM und die Internationalisierung der Architektur," http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2007/Article=258 (accessed 6 April 2014), 1–7.

nas, CIAM provided the chance to employ the glamor of internationality at home. This became apparent already in the considerations to organize a CIAM congress in Warsaw. Syrkus stressed financial problems, but explained: "This is a matter of prestige for our country—but also of the prestige of the congress which needs to be excellently organized." Explicitly hinting at the economy of prestige, Syrkus stated: "Our authorities declare the arrival of Le Corbusier a conditio sine qua non." Finally he explained that Polish CIAM members would know all too well "that Warsaw would not be as attractive a location as the venue of the previous congress." Yet this "would be a case of positive working support [*positive Arbeitsförderung*]." The Poles could establish good working conditions for CIRPAC. Moreover, Syrkus stressed that "our position concerning the current economic situation [the economic crisis] could be of rather great interest for colleagues working under similar conditions."[74]

International solutions were comparably more prestigious in Poland than in the West. This was true both for the label "international" and for the label "modern"—though the two cannot be entirely separated. Polish contributors to CIAM could profit both from the proximity to internationally known experts and from the aspiration of the Polish state to international recognition through ostensibly modern solutions.[75]

[74] Szymon Syrkus (10 April 1933), S. Syrkus an Giedion mit Zusicherungen betreffend den geplanten Kongress in Warschau. Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur (gta)—ETH Zürich, 42 K 1928–39; Syrkus, Sz. u. H., PL 1933.

[75] See the examples presented in Mansbach, "Modernism and Nationalist Architecture," 47–54. Piotr Piotrowski speaks of a "nationalization of modernism" in Poland in his "Eine neue Kunst—ein neuer Staat," 51–68. A very concrete aspect of this striving for modern solutions was not to remain at the bottom of European statistics on housing problems. Syrkus, *Społeczne cele urbanizacji*.

Conclusion

As with most urban plans not directly realized, it is difficult to reconstruct direct influences on future developments by the concept of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*.[76] But the gap between theoretical planning and the practical demands of planning "on the ground" diverged immensely. Martin Wagner, the influential *Stadtbaurat* of Berlin before 1933, emphasized the problem in a March 1935 memo to Walter Gropius and the Syrkus couple. Wagner contrasted the top-down approach taken by Chmielewski and Syrkus with his own concept of a thorough analysis of economic conditions, traffic, and so on. In his opinion, the Warsaw town planners failed to explain the "fundamental economic impetus [*Triebkräfte*] of Warsaw's future development." Without this information it would be impossible to set up a master plan.[77] In a similar way, Cornelis van Eesteren, CIAM's Dutch president, criticized the plan for its lack of thoroughness, while Gropius applauded the strong gesture.[78]

Tellingly, during World War II the concept attained new relevance. The plan itself served as a point of reference for underground planning after 1939 and was itself further developed.[79] In the astonishingly thorough and far-reaching plans of the Polish underground workshop Pracownia Architektoniczno-Urbanistyczna (Workshop of architects and urbanists), the concept served as an important basis.[80] In view of the ever more brutal destruction of the city—a fact well reflected by the Polish planners—the radical notion of a functional city grew ever more realistic. After 1945, with

[76] Chmielewski remained a major player in town playing in Warsaw until the German assault on Poland in September 1939—and again became one after 1945. Kotarbinski, "The Developing Career."

[77] Martin Wagner (8 March 1935), Die funktionelle Stadt: Eine kritische Betrachtung zur Klärung des Begriffs der funktionellen Stadt im Anschluss an die Arbeit der polnischen Gruppe "Praesens" und "U" über das städtebauliche Problem von Warschau. Bauhaus-Archiv, NL Gropius, CIAM-Papers II 129, Mappe 24, 12. Brief an Syrkusse plus 7-seitiges Konzept zur funkt. Stadt.

[78] Isaacs, *Walter Gropius*, 728; Somer, *The Functional City*, 196.

[79] Syrkus, "Pracownia Architektoniczno-Urbanistyczna," 157–64.

[80] Gutschow et al., *Vernichtung und Utopie*; Kohlrausch, "Warschau im Zweiten Weltkrieg," 23–42.

the nationalization of real estate within the city boundaries, at least theoretically a space of opportunities opened up.[81]

What Chmielewski and Syrkus did—and in this sense Wagner's critique somewhat missed this point—was to turn the difficult situation of Warsaw into an advantage. If one wants to assess the plan, one has to understand planning as a communicative act aimed at different audiences. Chmielewski and in particular Syrkus were not primarily interested in solving Warsaw's specific urban problems. Rather, in entering the existing discussion on the functional city with its codes and developing graphic vocabulary, they successfully established Warsaw on the international map as an example of dramatic urban challenges and radical planning opportunities.[82] Traffic not only figured as the dynamic momentum of Warsaw's future growth, but the traffic lines dominating the maps in the concepts directly linked Warsaw with Paris and other European cities. The communicative frame of reference "functional city" offered the opportunity to bring one's case into the sphere of international attention—much more so than traditional planning instruments, which rather implied a process of catching up in comparison to certain benchmarks. It was no coincidence that Syrkus became a prominent figure in CIAM after presenting the *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* concept and from 1937 on headed the congress's committee on regional planning.[83]

Both the history of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*'s conception and its reception show the power of planning beyond the frame of urbanism in a strictly technical sense. As a communicative statement it was also essential that the concept remained abstract to a large extent in order to be understood beyond Poland. Różański remained within the limits of classical urban planning, with regulation, hygiene, and the representative development of the capital as a leitmo-

[81] Crowley, "Paris or Moscow?" 769–97; Malisz, "Functional Warsaw"; Åman, *Architecture and Ideology*, 126; Szmelter, "Kilka uwag o wątkach planowania," i–v.

[82] Vossoughian, "Mapping the Modern City," 48–65.

[83] Helena Syrkus, Szymon Syrkus (1935), Korrespondenz im Hinblick auf CIRPAC-Treffen in Amsterdam. Funktionelle Stadt, Regionalplanung. Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur (gta)—ETH Zürich, 42 K 1928–39, Syrkus; Szymon u. Helena, PL 1935.

tif. However, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* can be seen as an attempt to overcome the process of catching up with Western examples and reversing the situation with a radical vision not conceivable in the already "crystallized"—as Chmielewski and Syrkus put it—cities of the West.

In addition, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* is a telling example for the rise of a certain strand of architects within the larger context of urban crisis—even if to some extent this meant making up the problems for which one could offer a solution. Again, simplifying a complex matter, one could argue that what Chmielewski and Syrkus proposed was to solve the urban problems of the nineteenth century (regulation, hygiene, housing) with—internationally communicated—planning instruments of the twentieth century. In a less radical way this was already true for the earlier plans by Tołwiński and Różański and certainly helped the impressive rise of urban and regional planning in Poland. Clearly there was a line of continuity in stressing the enormous chances Warsaw would have due to its favorable geographic position if only the right urbanistic instruments were applied. The dynamic of the "potential" city of European relevance was present already in earlier concepts that reacted to the specific challenges of postimperial Warsaw.[84]

While it is important to stress the specifics of Warsaw, it is equally important to highlight that many of the aspects mentioned above were typical for the cities in the region discussed in this volume. It is part of the tragedy of Warsaw's history that its central position—as Warsaw's president Stefan Starzyński expressed before being arrested by the Germans in his "I wanted Warsaw to be great" (*"Chciałem by Warszawa była wielka"*) speech—would in a certain sense, with respect to international resonance, only be fulfilled after the immense destruction that followed in the wake of the 1943 and 1944 uprisings, and its subsequent reconstruction.[85]

[84] This is most visible in a project to devote a whole quarter to Józef Piłsudski. Grzesiuk-Olszewska, "Konkurs na pomnik," 149–67.

[85] Drozdowski et al., *Stefan Starzyński*. See also a letter from 1940, which contrasts the widespread neglect of Warsaw before the war with the huge international resonance after the occupation: Madurowicz, *Miejska przestrzeń tożsamości Warszawy*.

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